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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses bilingualism from the point of view of language universals, including Fillmore's case grammar, McCawley's "anywhere rules" for lexical insertions and Slobin's operating principles in first language acquisition. It is assumed that first and second language learning is essentially the same, regardless of age. Whereas the monolingual learner's strategies involve the observation of intralinguistic connections between semantic representation and surface structure, the bilingual's strategies have a second interlinguistic dimension. In order to display his total language processing capacities, the bilingual needs a bilingual learning situation. The Multilingual Project illustrates how this can be achieved in a multilingual classroom. The learning materials developed by the Project are subject matter-oriented and student-centered. The learner can progress at his own rate studying in the language or languages of his preference with the help of bilingual tests supported by activity materials. This approach is based on the hypothesis that allowing the bilingual to learn at his own intellectual level will best serve his conceptual and linguistic development. (Author)

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"INTRA AND INTERLINGUISTIC CONTRAST"

Bilingual Education in Australia

The Multilingual Project - a model for effective learning in a multicultural society.

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Since World War Two Australia has become a pluralistic society as a direct result of its immigration policy. This policy was successful in that it stimulated economic expansion and brought prosperity to the nation. Australia, like other host countries for immigrant labour, has only recently begun to pay attention to the multilingualism of its school population. In a relatively short period of time a great deal of work has been done in the teaching of English to children and adults. Some schools also offer foreign language classes in Italian and Greek in addition to, or instead of, the traditional French and German classes, thereby recognizing the mother tongues of the largest immigrant groups. As a collorary to these language teaching activities, the author has developed and implemented a model of bilingual education which builds on the immigrant's total language competence, i.e. his mother tongue and English.

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INTRODUCTION.

For the purpose of this paper the author proposes the following definitions:

(a) a bilingual is a person who can function in two language environments.

(b) bilingual education is a form of schooling that provides, within the official school system, the opportunity to learn both in the MT (mother tongue) and in the majority language.

In the Australian setting, this definition of a bilingual makes it possible to include in the present discussion, all school children with a non- English speaking background, i.e. immigrant and aboriginal children. Although the two groups have bilingualism in common, in most other respects their situation is markedly different. The bilingual education programmes developed for aboriginal children with the support of the Australian Education Department have been modelled on experiences in the schooling of American Indian children. This field has been well documented and will not be discussed here. (For a brief description see Fowler, 1974). The focus of interest will be the relevance of bilingual education to the children of immigrants attending secondary schools. They will be referred to as adolescents covering an approximate age range from eleven to sixteen years.

WHAT THE BILINGUAL KNOWS.

One of the cogent arguments in favour of bilingual education is based on the principle that the school takes the learner from where he stands, builds on and develops what he already knows, and certainly does not waste it. The bilingual's knowledge enables him to use two independent codes. It can be expected that there will be an intra- and inter-linguistic asymmetry between his comprehension and production grammars in these. Although this asymmetry makes educational planning difficult, the principle still stands that the bilingual's total linguistic know-

ledge should be utilized to further his intellectual development. The model of bilingual education developed by the Multilingual Project is precisely built on this principle. It gives the student the opportunity to use his total communicative competence in the learning situation.

LANGUAGE UNIVERSALS.

There is a great deal in the current linguistic literature that can serve to illuminate some aspects of bilingualism. As it is reasonable to assume that language universals are a necessary condition of bilingualism, the discussion on these is of particular interest. For instance, Fillmore's (1968a) case grammar lends direct support to the view that the bilingual's capacity to express his intention in different codes is a surface structure variation based on a unified cognitive network.

> "In the basic structure of sentences, then, we find what might be called the 'propositions', a tenseless set of relationships involving verbs and nouns (and embedded sentences, if there are any), separated from what might be called the 'modality' constituent. This latter will include such modalities on the sentence-as-a-whole as negation, tense, mood, and aspect." (p.23)
>
> "The case notions comprise a set of universal, presumably innate, concepts which identify certain types of judgements human beings are capable of making about the events that are going on around them, judgements about such matters as who did it, who it happened to, and what got changed." (p.24)

Finally, while discussing the appropriateness of the use of words he says that

> "..it looks very much as if for a considerable portion of the vocabulary of a language, the conditions determining the appropriate use of a

> word involve statements about properties of real world objects rather than statements about the semantic features of words.." (1968b:131)

The view that all languages share a common starting point is supported by Lakoff (1970:158) who thinks that there is a"likelihood that a common set of deep structures for languages such as English, Chinese, Japanese, etc., can be found." Ross (1970:260) makes a stronger claim when he describes the "Universal Base Hypothesis" as follows: "The deep structures of all languages are identical, up to the ordering of constituents immediately dominated by the same node."

If languages share a common, deep structure, this has educational implications for the bilingual. Where the focus of teaching is to be on concept development, as in the Multilingual Project, the language in which information is first presented and processed is of relatively minor importance. In principle, concepts mediated through one language are retrievable in another. As the bilingual's languages tend to be domain specific, he is the best judge of his own competence in a given area. Once learning has taken place, presentation of the same idea in the other language may help the bilingual to separate his languages on the basis of interlinguistic comparison.

LEXICAL INSERTION.

If SR (semantic representation) is shared across languages, it would be interesting to know at what point, and how, mapping into surface structure becomes language specific.

McCawley (1974:81) emphasizes "that the ultimate elements of semantic representations need not correspond to the words of surface structure ....but will rather be the various semantic elements involved in the meanings of the words (plus, generally, semantic elements that are not given overt expression)". More specifically, he states that (1968:71) "there is a single system of rules (henceforth 'transformations') which relates semantic representation to surface structure through intermediate stages." This..."implies that various lexical items get put in by transformations. Indeed , each 'dictionary entry' could be

regarded as a transformation which replaces a portion of a tree that terminates in semantic material by a complex of syntactic and phonological material. At what point in the derivation of a sentence do these transformations apply?"(p.72) McCawley answers his own question only tentatively. He favours the possibility "..that lexical insertions are 'anywhere rules', i.e. rules which are not assigned a fixed ordering with respect to other rules but which apply whenever the configuration to which they apply arises." (p.78)

This suggests that the question, in what language a bilingual thinks, may be irrelevant.
One should rather ask which is the preferred language for replacing semantic representation with lexical items. More specifically, is there a categorical preference, or does it vary according to domains? Bilinguals who function in two language environments may have to switch languages several times a day. Their language choice is socially determined and domain specific. (Fishman 1972). This implies that the bilingual's competence varies across his languages according to situations, so that he may prefer to use his weaker language in certain circumstances. The Multilingual Project allows him to use the language of his preference when studying a particular topic.

Another variable in the bilingual's language is his ability to avoid interference. There is a significant body of language contact literature investigating the question of what triggers off interference besides an obvious lack of knowledge.(cf. Weinreich 1974, Clyne 1967, 1972 and others). Since sentences are the result of semantically and syntactically based transformations there is a strong link between the lexical items they contain. It can be assumed that this intralinguistic bond helps the competent bilingual to keep his languages apart. Theoretically, the bilingual weak in one or both of his languages should find this more difficult. He may be able to communicate, but if his language shows elements of interference, this will be socially stigmatized.

LANGUAGE LEARNING THEORIES.

In a society where earning power is closely linked to certification the schools play an important role in the career choice of their students.

The bilingual adolescent whose language competence does not meet the expectations of the school, must first acquire the language of instruction before he can participate effectively in subject matter learning.He must do this in a relatively short time as he is nearing the end of his schooling. In such a situation successful language learning is at a premium. Today, it is generally accepted that first language acquisition is based on the innate capacity to scan language data for relevant information, to construct and continually adjust a grammar, until it approximates that of the mature speaker. This process of adjustment is essentially one of comparing, and involves expansion, addition and re-ordering. The research literature, until recently, was preoccupied with the problem of establishing a predictable progression in language development. Less attention was paid to the nature of scanning, whether it is random or methodical. Slobin(1973:197) defines "a set of presumably universal operating principles which every child brings to bear on the problem of language acquisition. From these operating principles, a number of more specific strategies can be derived, finally resulting in language-specific strategies for the acquisition of aspects of a given native language." These principles are based on perceptual salience and cognitive prerequisites. Ervin-Tripp(1973) lists some of these prerequisites. They include an understanding of location, possession and modality. Ervin-Tripp uses the term modality to refer to the contrast between asking, demanding, and commenting. This difference may be signalled by gesture and paralinguistic features before identifiable words begin." (p.210)

Both Slobin and Ervin-Tripp stress the primacy of cognitive development. In support of the argument that language often lags behind cognitive development due to the complexity of the relevant linguistic form, Slobin (1973) cites the case of a Hungarian-Serbo-Croatian bilingual child who acquired the locative earlier in Hungarian than in Serbo-Croatian. According to Slobin's criteria the locative expression in Hungarian is simpler: "the locative marker is always at the end of the noun only, always unambiguously and consistently indicates both position and direction to or from." (1973:188)

Slobin's toddler exemplifies the situation of the bilingual learner. As his linguistic development encompasses two languages instead of one, they jointly mirror his cognitive development. One language will not give a true picture of it. Knowing two languages is not a simple matter of duplication, but also of differential competence due to differential language use. It can be taken for granted that the bilingual's languages in some respects parellel, in others complete, each other. It is the unlikelihood of balanced bilingualism that the school must take into account.

As has been stated earlier, it is essential for the language learner to observe and compare. It is not reasonable to assume that he would employ different learning strategies because he is developing two languages instead of one. His task is the same, to acquire tacit linguistic knowledge, but the data he must internalize are more complex as they refer to two sets of independent rules.

In the early stages of first language acquisition cognitive development acts as a guide ensuring a roughly predictable progression: it takes care of what the learner will attend to. The question, then, is what selection procedures can the adolescent, who is in an advanced stage of cognitive development, employ? He has to acquire an immense set of data to match his second language with what he already knows. At the same time he is under pressure to acquire new concepts. During lessons, or while studying textbooks concerned with subject matter learning, he is faced with a language input that masks rather than mediates meaning. In this situation he will most likely rely on intelligent guessing, one of the few language processing strategies available to him. But even if he fully exploits this ability, he may have difficulty in checking whether he has guessed correctly. One of his valuable language processing tools, his previous linguistic knowledge, will not give him the necessary support; in particular he will not be able to profit by the redundancies inherent in natural languages. Redundancy reduces choice and therefore makes language more predictable. For example, the third person singular is marked twice in the English sentence, "he paints!" As listeners or readers we need not attend to both cues. The second language learner who lacks the necessary pre-

knowledge tends to attend to too many cues while still missing some essential ones. This makes for inefficiency in language processing. The technique of giving factual information in both languages supplies the bilingual with semantic redundancy. As he can compare the language specific surface structure forms of the same SR across languages, his cognitive and linguistic development can mutually support each other.

It is the contention of this author that language learning is essentially the same process irrespective of age and order of acquisition . Namely, to know a language implies that the speaker "must have at his disposal a vast complex of highly specific rules or principles" and to acquire these he "must have at his disposal" a set of highly specific expectations and strategies concerning human language." (Seuren, 1974:2) But, whereas the monolingual learner's strategies involve the comparison of intralingual models and the observation of the intralinguistic connections between SR and surface structure, the bilingual's strategies and observations have a second interlinguistic dimension. In order to deploy his total language processing capacities, the bilingual needs a bilingual learning situation.

SOCIALLY IMPOSED BILINGUALISM.

Educators in countries like Australia which receive immigrants, often debate the question of MT language maintenance. Undoubtedly, official policies reflected in the language teaching provisions made in schools directly affect MT development but do not wholly determine it. Bilingualism is socially imposed and cannot be legislated out of existence. The children of immigrants often need the MT to interact with parents, the extended family and friends. It is the language of their private lives. At school, in employment and generally on public occasions they need their second language.

It seems, therefore, desirable to maximize the bilingual's knowledge in both languages. In cases of parallel linguistic development, concepts will be reinforced by interlinguistic rather than intralinguistic forms. If the school does not cater for MT development, the first

language will be stabilized at the level of the family's vernacular which may be a dialect. To develop a language fully, other models are necessary as well as literacy skills which lend strong support to language. Literacy is a school responsibility and should not depend on the family's private efforts.

THE PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE.

The practical experience in schools has shown that bilinguals do not prosper intellectually in a monolingual situation. Developments in Australia are typical in this respect. Immigrants were received into the country without any planning for the educational needs of their children. Eventually failure prompted action and resources were deployed on the teaching of English, while the MT has been ignored rather than suppressed. But now some teachers disappointed with the results of concentrating on the English language learning aspect of immigrant education have started to explore other avenues. Their attention has been drawn to MT maintenance, partly stimulated by the growing self-conciousness of immigrant groups. An ever increasing number of primary and secondary schools are introducing the study of immigrant languages into their curricula. School libraries are spending some of the money made available by State and Federal Governments to disadvantaged schools on immigrant language books. Undoubtedly, the school has a responsibility to develop the immigrant child's language skills in the MT.But this is not enough, the school has further responsibilities. It must create a learning situation which is congruent with the student's intellectual development. It is the contention of this paper that this can only be achieved if the student's total linguistic knowledge is brought into play. The Multilingual Project aims to do this.

THE MULTILINGUAL PROJECT.

Objectives:

(a) To foster students conceptual development.

(b) To stimulate student's language development in the MT and English

(c) To provide student satisfaction with the learning process.
(d) To reduce the difficulties created by a multilingual situation.
(e) To provide teacher satisfaction with the teaching process.

DESCRIPTION:

The Project materials consist of a series of units on selected topics in the Social Studies area. Initially they are developed in English. At present parellel versions are available in six immigrant languages: Greek, Italian, Turkish, Serbian, Croatian and Greek. These were the languages requested by schools. They include the Mts of the largest immigrant groups (where language maintenance is strongest) and of the most recent arrivals. Each unit is self-contained, and is suitable for independent or small-group study. The units consist of illustrated booklets, and additional material in a Resource Kit. Answer guides are also provided.

The topics are similar to those studied by monolingual Australian students in the 11-13 age group. They have been selected in consultation with teachers. They include the following titles: Animal Families; Communications; Libraries and You; Traffic Acccidents;Myths of the Australian Aborigines; Sport.

The Project is operative in 15 schools involving about 500 students. In the actual school situation, the units are being studied on an individual basis, by homogeneous groups, and in a normal classroom situation where immigrant students and monolingual Australians study the same materials in the language or languages of their choice. This approach is student centred and flexible. It is designed to serve the following groups of students:

1. Immigrant children who have not achieved full competence in English and therefore do not make good progress at school . They can be classified into two groups:
   (a) those who are recent arrivals and have experienced part of their schooling abroad, and

(b) those who have a strong native background in their home and neighbourhood.

2. Immigrant children who have considerable competence in English and their MT.

3. Australian students who are learning the language of immigrant groups.

The author was prompted to include group three in the target population for the following reasons:

1. In a multilingual setting it is desirable for everyone to have a second language learning experience.

2. Working with the Project materials gives students a similar learning experience irrespective of linguistic background. This should lead to greater mutual understanding.

3. Bilingual learning fosters second language acquisition. This is a strong claim. The arguments to support it include those mentioned in this paper in relation to the education of bilinguals, i.e. the language learner must compare, learning materials should be informative and congruent with the intellectual level of the learner. Others could be added but it goes beyond the scope of this paper to discuss foreign language teaching methods.

CONCLUSION.

Evaluation of the Project is in progress and has to be completed before accurate data can be given, but there are already some favourable indications. Teachers using the Project materials, report that their perception of bilingual students' ability has changed. They have discovered greater competence in these students than was previously apparent. The students themselves value the opportunity of language choice and interlinguistic comparison. These reactions seem to indicate that, on the basis of language universals and language teaching strategies, the hypothesis underlying the Multilingual Project might be validated. In other words, there are perhaps

advantages in the type of bilingual education which gives priority to conceptual development over development in a particular language, but at the same time makes both languages available to the learner.

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